

## Message Text

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UNCLAS PANAMA 2519

PARIS FOR UNESCO; ROME FOR FODAG; VIENNA FOR IAEA AND UNIDO

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ECRP UNDP PN  
SUBJECT: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

REF: A-2507

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES MISSION'S COMMENTS ON  
UN SYSTEM ASSISTANCE IN RESPONSE TO REPAIR. RESPONSE IS KEYED  
TO LETTERED SUB-PARAGRAPHS OF PARAGRAPH 9 REPAIR. END SUMMARY.

2. A. IMPORTANCE OF UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRY'S TOTAL  
DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THE UN PROGRAM IS A VERY SMALL ELEMENT  
IN PANAMA'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. WHILE THERE ARE  
VARIATIONS DUE TO THE NATURAL EBB AND FLOW OF PROJECT ACTIVI-  
TIES, TOTAL EXPENDITURES HAVE BEEN RUNNING AT A RATE OF A  
LITTLE MORE THAN \$1.0 MILLION PER YEAR AND THEY ARE EXPECTED  
TO CONTINUE TO BE AT ABOUT THIS LEVEL FOR THE PROJECTED FUTURE.  
THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS ARE, HOWEVER, CONCENTRATED IN FOUR  
PRIORITY AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE GOP (SEE E  
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BELOW), SO THE PROGRAM COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS SMALL, BUT  
NOT INSIGNIFICANT.

B. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. OUR OBSERVATIONS INDICATE PROJECT  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEEDING IN GENERALLY SATISFACTORY MANNER.  
THERE HAVE BEEN OCCASIONAL PROBLEMS IN GETTING PROJECT EQUIPMENT  
CLEARED THROUGH CUSTOMS AND THERE ARE SOMETIMES DELAYS IN  
OBTAINING QUALIFIED TECHNICAL PERSONNEL FROM THE VARIOUS

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. THE GOP'S CONTRIBUTION TO CURRENT PROJECTS IS LARGELY IN KIND (SERVICES OF GOP EMPLOYEES, OFFICE SPACE, ETC.). THE NEW UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE (RES REP) HAS INDICATED HIS INTENTION OF OBTAINING A GOP CASH CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET OF FUTURE PROJECTS, BUT THIS NEW POLICY HAS NOT YET BEEN PUT INTO EFFECT.

C. PROJECT EVALUATION. HEAVY RELIANCE IS PLACED ON THE TRIPARTITE REVIEW SYSTEM. UN STAFF MEMBERS REPORT THAT IT IS WORKING QUITE WELL AND THAT THE NEW UNDP PROJECT DESIGN SYSTEM (WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON EXPLICIT PROJECT PROGRESS INDICATORS) IS ALSO HAVING POSITIVE EFFECTS ON PROJECT EVALUATION.

D. EXAMINATION OF UNDP PROJECT PROPOSALS. THE MISSION DOES NOT REVIEW INDIVIDUAL PROJECT PROPOSALS, BUT A CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE LIAISON RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED AND IS MAINTAINED WITH THE RES REP AND HIS STAFF.

E. COUNTRY PROGRAMMING. AS INDICATED IN A ABOVE, THE PROJECTS ARE HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN FOUR AREAS OF HIGH DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY, WHICH HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE GOP. THESE AREAS ARE: (1) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, (2) PREPARATION OF SECTORAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, (3) PRZ-FEASIBILITY AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES IN ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, FISHERIES, FOREST RESOURCES, AND AGRO-INDUSTRY, AND (4) EXPORT PROMOTION. THE RES REP HAS INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO SEE EVEN MORE CONCENTRATION OF THE PROGRAM AND A FORMAL UNDP/GOP PROGRAM REVIEW HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR JULY.

F. PERFORMANCE OF THE UN SYSTEM. BOTH RES REP AND UNDP PROGRAM UNCLASSIFIED

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OFFICERS HAVE ONLY RECENTLY ARRIVED IN PANAMA AND ARE IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP ROLES. THEY ARE OFF TO A RUNNING START AND HAVE ALREADY SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE GOP.

G. COORDINATION OF ALL EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE. A DONOR COORDINATION GROUP (DCG) WITH REPRESENTATION INCLUDING AID, IDB, PAHO/WHO, OAS, AND UNDP IS AN INFORMAL COORDINATING MECHANISM WHICH MEETS EVERY 6-8 WEEKS TO DISCUSS GENERAL PLANS AND EXCHANGE IDEAS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. GOP IS AWARE OF AND HAS NOT EXPRESSED SENSITIVITY TO SUCH COORDINATION. DCG DISCUSSIONS HAVE LED TO FORMATION OF AD-HOC WORKING GROUPS TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL MATTERS. RES REP AND STAFF PLAY AN ACTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THIS PROCESS.

H. WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT. UNDP FACES NO CONSTRAINTS OR OBSTACLES TO USING WOMEN AS EXPERTS (THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL) OR INTEGRATING THEM INTO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. A PROJECT'S PROBABLE EFFECTS ON WOMEN IS ONE OF THE FACTORS ROUTINELY CONSIDERED DURING THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

I. SELF-RELIANCE AND MUTUAL SELF-HELP. IN LINE WITH ESTABLISHED UNDP POLICY, THE RES REP AND HIS STAFF ARE WORKING TO ENCOURAGE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPMENT COUNTRIES (TCDC). WHITE PANAMA IS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO MOVE TO "NET

CONTRIBUTOR" STATUS, THE GOP HAS SHOWN ITS INTEREST IN  
TCDC BY HOSTING A REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUBJECT IN  
PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN BUENOS  
AIRES LATER THIS YEAR.

3. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT QN RESOURCES  
DEVOTED TO ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN PANAMA  
ARE NOT BEING EFFECTIVELY UTILIZED OR THAT THE PROGRAMS  
ARE NOT MEETING THEIR DESIGNED OBJECTIVES.  
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